



**California Department of Veterans Affairs**  
**Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (DVBE) Advisory Council**  
**Meeting Minutes, May 15, 2003**

**Location**

Medal of Honor Hall, California Department of Veterans Affairs, 1227 O Street, Sacramento, California, 95814

**Participants**

**DVBE**

Allen Amaro, Jerry Caton, Don Gonneville, Ken Jackson, Floyd Knox, Bob Mulz, and Larry Turner

**CDVA**

Glen Halsey, Ralph Cansimbe, Steven Dakota, and Sheryl Schmidt

**DGS**

Gloria Anderson and Flemming Duke

**Special Guests**

Burt McChesney, Larry Brooks, and A.J. Wilson

**Members Absent**

Alison Boyle, Bill Bruckner, Kevin O'Connor, John Rak, John Robbins, Francis Trottier, and Timothy Voors

**Action Items**

Date Assigned: 3/28/03

Responsibility: Council Members

Council members interested in participating in or chairing a committee should contact Don Gonneville at Ph (949) 248-7297 Fax (949) 248-0666 Email [don@gonneville.com](mailto:don@gonneville.com)

Response Date:

Response:

Date Assigned: 3/28/03

Responsibility: Alison Boyle

Provide Information on Bill/Legislation Subscription Service to receive updates

### **Action Items (continued)**

via email.

Response Date:

Response:

### **Welcome and Introductions**

Don Gonneville, DVBE Co-Chair introduced Glen Halsey, Chief, Veterans Services Division (VSD), California Department of Veterans Affairs (CDVA) at 10:07 am. Mr. Halsey welcomed the Council and attendees and opened the meeting. Mr. Halsey introduced Sheryl Schmidt (CDVA) and then asked those in attendance to introduce themselves.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Gonneville asked the Council members for approval of the DVBE Advisory Minutes of March 28, 2003. A motion was made for approval. No discussion. Motion passed. Minutes were approved at 10:12 am.

### **Program Update**

Mr. Halsey announced changes made recently within CDVA. Marty Sengo and Joe Barajas were transferred back to DGS, and an active recruitment will be going on to replace them. Mr. Halsey stated that the positions would most likely not be filled until July 1<sup>st</sup> and that Sheryl Schmidt and Steve Dakota will assist him until then. Mr. Halsey said that there were several bills pending for cemetery site selection committees to be created, and that Steve Dakota will devote most of his time to DVBE and **not** the cemetery project as discussed before. Mr. Halsey stated that the delay in filling the positions formerly held by Mr. Sengo and Mr. Barajas was because he wanted to take the time needed to find the right candidates and not just fill them quickly. Allen Amaro asked exactly what Steve Dakota's job would be as he was "once upon a time" the DVBE Advocate. Mr. Halsey explained that Mr. Dakota would be assisting with DVBE matters until the positions are filled. Mr. Amaro said that he was concerned about who the candidate might be, and that "we need someone who's focused and knows about contracting." Mr. Halsey said that the most qualified would be selected and that a small business or DVBE background would be a bonus. Mr. Gonneville said three issues would be dealt with in the meeting and then be turned over to Mr. Halsey and his staff to handle. He also said that Assembly Member Nicole Parra, Committee On Veterans Affairs, was currently tied up in a meeting and the Council would break early for lunch to accommodate her schedule. Mr. Gonneville said that Mr. Amaro needed to leave the meeting early, so his action item would be moved up so the Council could discuss it.

## **Open Discussion Topic/Companies That Do Business With CDVA/DVBE**

Mr. Amaro began his discussion at 10:30 am. He suggested tracking successful people/companies in the bidding process to show how they did it. By gaining this info, mentoring of new DVBE's would be possible. Mr. Amaro said that he would like to get information such as who got specific contracts, the amount of money spent, etc. Mr. Halsey said he would get something out as soon as possible. Mr. Amaro said it was important to gather the information and confirm that it is correct. Larry Turner stated that "verification of numbers is very important", and agreed that a mentor/protégé program could be set up within the DVBE community with volunteers. Bob Mulz agreed that a mentoring program was needed, as 10,000 troops would soon be returning to San Diego, and that approximately 3,000 of them would be Disabled Veterans. Mr. Amaro brought up the recent articles in The Sacramento Bee about certifications being pulled from DVBE's, and how some unscrupulous individuals had taken advantage of Disabled Veterans. The same individuals were free to begin business the day after the certification was pulled, but the Disabled Vet was the one who suffered. "This is what happens to our Veterans!" Mr. Amaro exclaimed. Mr. Amaro then left the meeting at 10:45 am. Mr. Halsey suggested putting together a guide book on how to be a successful DVBE. Mr. Turner agreed that it was a good idea, but that "it wouldn't do much until DGS makes changes that put DVBE's on a fair playing field". He also said that he'd rather focus on "keeping DVBE's in business than burying them." Mr. Turner stated that DGS "doesn't care for DVBE, has done no backing, and would prefer we were shot and killed." Floyd Knox suggested that DVBE's that have been successful help with mentoring and answering questions for those DVBE's in an incubation stage. Jerry Caton said that there was a mentoring program for technical support and counseling on a Federal level, and that it was needed on a State level as well.

## **Reconstitution of Committees**

Mr. Gonneville opened the discussion on committees at 11:05 am. Mr. Halsey said that mentoring would be added to the Outreach Committee. After a brief discussion, it was decided that three Committees would remain:

- Outreach/PR/Mentoring
- Legislative
- State Agency Issues/DVBE Issues

Mr. Gonneville suggested that one member from CDVA and DGS should be on each Committee. He then closed the meeting for an early lunch break at 11:15 am and asked attendees to be back at 12 noon to meet with Assembly Member Nicole Parra.

Adjournment For Lunch

## **Legislative Update**

Mr. Gonneville opened the meeting at 12:04 pm and introduced Gloria Anderson from DGS who was in for Pat Jones. As Ms. Anderson began her Legislative Update, Chief Consultant Burt McChesney from Committee on Veterans Affairs entered the room. The Update ended as the floor was turned over to Mr. McChesney.

## **Remarks:Chief Consultant Burt McChesney Committee on Veterans Affairs**

Mr. McChesney addressed the Council at 12:06 pm and apologized for Ms. Parra's absence. He conveyed on her behalf that she's "very interested in DVBE." Mr. McChesney stated that they were working and looking at what needs to be done to help DVBE. A draft of significant overhauls for DVBE was handed out to attendees. Mr. McChesney stated that the changes and improvements might not happen due to the \$38 million deficit. He explained that in the draft, changes to existing law were underlined and sections that would be deleted were crossed out. Mr. McChesney apologized for the previous drafting error that stated that a DVBE must be a non-profit organization. Larry Turner stated that the non-profit requirement was added in so the Agency could bring its numbers up and receive a "pat on the back." New Directions, a non-profit organization that helps Veterans with counseling and employment was discussed. Larry Brooks said that changing the definition of a Disabled Veteran is a "slippery slope." A.J. Wilson asked Mr. McChesney what the function of the Committee on Veterans Affairs was. Mr. McChesney stated that approximately 40-60 bills a year come through and the Committee analyzes them. He said that the Committee also wants to explore how to make the DVBE program better. Bob Mulz warned against watering down DVBE with different categories such as non-profit. Mr. Mulz stated, "DVBE is being watered down and we're losing our identity." Referring to New Directions being given both non-profit and DVBE status, Mr. Mulz said, "We have a big enough cross to bare without baring everyone else's. Now we're associated with homeless Vets and the stereotype is that we're the Vet on the side of the road with a tin cup and pencils." Jerry Caton said that a non-profit organization is **not** a DVBE. He said, "If it is not owned 51% by a Disabled Vet, it is not a DVBE." Mr. Caton said that the intent of the law was to help the Disabled Veteran compete and adding non-profit changes the definition. Ken Jackson said, "I'm torn now, not confused, but caught in the middle on this issue." Mr. McChesney explained what New Directions does and how it gives incentives to agencies to contract with them. Mr. Turner said "It still appears to me it's a way for the agency to do some back patting." Mr. Halsey told the Council about the Veterans Resource Center in Sacramento which helps Vets go from homeless to homeowner. He urged Council Members to visit the facility. Mr. McChesney thanked the Council for their time and left the meeting at 1 pm.

## **Open Discussion Topics/DVBE Participation in CDVA Construction Projects**

Bob Mulz discussed errors he found while visiting CDVA Project construction sites. He was highly critical and described some of the errors that had to be redone at a high cost. Mr. Mulz said that wrong equipment had been purchased, dangerous wiring had been installed, and cited other mistakes at the Veterans Homes site. He stated that there are skilled DVBE's who could have consulted and designed the project, thus avoiding the extra cost of redoing faulty work. Larry Turner said, "This is travesty." Mr. Gonneville said, "We need to meet with the people responsible for the construction." A motion to meet with Secretary Johannessen regarding design and construction was made by Larry Brooks and seconded by Ken Jackson. The discussion continued as Mr. Mulz described a fire alarm in Chula Vista that had been improperly installed. Motion carried that a meeting will be set up with the Secretary to discuss the issue.

## **Council Membership/Demographics**

Mr. Gonneville handed out a map of California which displays the location of DVBE Council Members. The map reflects that largely populated areas such as Los Angeles are not being represented. Mr. Gonneville stated that Fresno, Bakersfield, and Los Angeles are in need of active participating Council Members. He suggested a simple application be created for potential Council Members. After filling it out, the applicant would meet with the Council. Mr. Gonneville then asked Larry Brooks and A.J. Wilson to leave the room so that Council members could vote on their status as new Council Members. The Council voted unanimously for both. Absent Members will vote via email.

## **DVBE Name Change**

Bob Mulz suggested the E be removed from DVBE, asking, "Why do we need it?" He said that DVE or DVB might be better. Steve Dakota suggested Disabled Veteran Entrepreneur. Larry Turner said that with State budget woes and the necessary paper work, "It isn't going to happen." Gloria Anderson strongly urged that the name not be changed and received an ovation from the Council.

## **DVBE Advocate-Publicity**

Mr. Halsey announced that he would be the DVBE Advocate and was working on a news release. More information will follow. Any DVBE Council news releases that go out must first be approved by the majority of the Council.

The council took an afternoon break at 1:50 pm.

## **DVBE Status**

The meeting resumed at 2:03 pm. Mr. Gonneville discussed Jerry Caton's status as a DVBE since he is retired. Mr. Gonneville stated that Mr. Caton has over twenty years experience as a DVBE and has much to contribute and is actively involved with the Council. Mr. Gonneville asked, "Should we make this an issue?" Council agreed Mr. Caton will continue as an active member.

## **Open Discussion**

Sheryl Schmidt brought up the idea of creating a folder with information about DVBE that would include an application. She referred to it as a "DVBE Starter Kit." Mr. Gonneville said it would be assigned to the Outreach Committee. Mr. Dakota suggested it also be available in an electronic form. Mr. Turner agreed it was a great idea and stated he had written the Secretary suggesting a similar idea previously. The discussion turned to the general feeling of the Council about what progress has been made. Mr. Gonneville said, "We are empowered and if we don't make progress, shame on us." Mr. Caton said, "There is a real brotherhood and sisterhood here, and DGS couldn't get rid of us by changing the mission statement every year." Mr. Halsey reminded the Council of his commitment to DVBE and said, "I will do everything possible to make it succeed."

## **Committee Assignments**

After a brief discussion, it was decided that Committees will be voted on via email since several Council Members were absent.

## **Open Discussion**

Mr. Halsey asked Council Members to give him their top five issues via email [glen.halsey@cdva.ca.gov](mailto:glen.halsey@cdva.ca.gov) or call his cell phone (916) 801-6097. Mr. Gonneville suggested that Council Members fax or email topics/issues for the next meeting to him over the next month. He said, "It's obvious if we come well prepared to the meetings, we can make it through the agenda and we realize that today." Larry Turner stated that he felt things were really starting to gel but questioned the Secretary's open door policy. Mr. Halsey reinforced his commitment to the Council and as the DVBE Advocate.

## **Future Meetings**

Mr. Halsey announced the dates for the next two meetings:

- July 9 at 10:00 am
- September 17 at 10 am

### **Closing Remarks**

Mr. Halsey stated, "We are moving forward and making progress." He told Council members he was committed for the next 3 ½ years unless he's terminated or retires. Mr. Gonneville adjourned the meeting at 2:59 pm.

### **Meeting Adjourned**